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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

SANITIZED

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February 12, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The use of Vandenberg Air Force Base for polar launches of the Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) has been firm since the primary intelligence mission for the program was approved last year. Prior to that time, when the MOL was being considered for a variety of other experiments, equatorial launches would have been a possibility.

The Titan IIC MOL polar launches can only be performed by flying south from Vandenberg AFB. Flying due south from Cape Kennedy would result in the trajectory passing directly over southern Florida, including Miami, and this would be totally unacceptable from range safety considerations. It is possible to go into polar orbit from Cape Kennedy by launching to the east and then making a "dog leg" maneuver to the south. This has been done on three previous Tiros (meteorological satellite) shots, each time requiring range safety exceptions and State Department approval.

The probabilities of impact and fatality are 100 times greater in this situation than from polar launches from Vandenberg. In the case of NASA launches, the concern is primarily one of danger to life and property. In the case of the MOL launch, we would be very concerned with the probability of impact and recovery of any portion of the highly classified payload.

Of primary importance is the loss in payload capacity that results from this "dog leg" maneuver. Depending on the type of maneuver performed, the Titan IIC could lift 2,000 to 5,000 lbs. less than the 30,000 lbs. it delivers to polar orbit from Vandenberg. With this loss in payload the primary intelligence mission simply could not be performed.

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There is currently a nine month to one year slip in the first manned launch of the MOL. This results directly from the time to develop the primary payload and has nothing to do with the construction of facilities at Vandenberg.

The Titan III facilities at Cape Kennedy cost \$60M for the "brick and mortar" plus \$90M for the aerospace ground equipment (AGE). There are two launch pads. At Vandenberg the single pad launch facility will cost \$35M for the brick and mortar plus \$79M for the AGE. Approximately \$70M would have to be added to the Cape Kennedy facilities if MOL were to be launched from there.

The Cape Kennedy Titan III facilities will continue to be used for the Titan III R&D program for which there are 10 more shots planned. The Air Force is currently developing plans for the follow-on launches of Titan III, which would include such projects as communications satellites, nuclear test detection, meteorology, early warning and strategic surveillance.

Attached is a draft reply to Mr. Martin Andersen's letter.

*Yuse Vance*

Attachment

DRAFT

Mr. Martin Andersen  
Publisher  
Orlando Sentinel  
Orlando, Florida

Dear Mr. Andersen:

Thank you very much for calling to my attention the editorial on the Manned Orbiting Laboratory which appeared in your fine newspaper. Actually I am quite aware of the situation addressed and previously satisfied myself as to the necessity of providing facilities on both coasts to launch the Titan III. I hope this explanation will satisfy you that this decision was not lightly made.

As you know the MOL is a military space program. Polar launches are required to accomplish its principal missions. While it is true that some polar launches have been conducted from the Eastern Test Range using the "dog leg" maneuver this does result in a reduction in payload capacity. In the case of the Manned Orbiting Laboratory the 10-15% loss in payload required by performing this maneuver is sufficient to jeopardize seriously the success of the program. Furthermore, there is a probability in the case of failures of impacting classified military payloads on Cuba.

The facilities which will be built at Vandenberg to launch the MOL will be considerably simpler than those available at the Integrated Transfer and Launch Titan III facility at Cape Kennedy. We have every intention of using the Cape Kennedy facilities to maximum advantage in our space program. In particular there are 10 remaining launches in the Titan III R&D program which will be used to orbit such important programs as the Defense communication satellites and nuclear test detection (Vela) satellites. Current Air Force plans beyond the R&D program currently involve approximately four launches per year and include such programs as follow-on communications, meteorology and early warning satellites.

As you are aware I am extremely concerned with economy in Government and would not have approved the building of additional Titan III facilities at Vandenberg if I was not certain that it is important to national security, makes optimum use of our space launch facilities and together satisfies the best interests of our government.

Thank you again for your interest in this very important program.

Sincerely,

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